

I established with President Putin in Slovenia.

This is good news for the American people today. It'll make the world more peaceful, and put behind us the cold war once and for all.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:32 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, prior to his departure for Chicago, IL. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Putin of Russia.

Remarks in a Discussion on the Welfare to Work Program in Chicago,
Illinois
May 13, 2002

The President. Thank you all very much for that warm welcome. Mr. Mayor, I'm honored to be in your presence. This man is a great mayor of a great city. I've learned one thing: I'd rather have him for me than against me. [*Laughter*] And the good news is, he is for the people of Chicago, and that's important, Mr. Mayor.

Michael, thank you very much for having us here. We're honored to be able to come and to talk about how to make America a more compassionate and better place for all people.

I want to thank Rodney Carroll, who is the president of the Welfare-to-Work Partnership, for being here. He has helped recruit thousands of businesses across the country, which have employed over 1.1 million citizens who were formerly on welfare, who are now independent and free to realize their dreams. Rodney, thank you for your leadership. I want to thank my two new friends who are here, with whom we'll be discussing their lives and how important work is for the future of their family.

I want to thank members of the congressional delegation who are joining us today: Senator Peter Fitzgerald—thank you, Peter, for coming. Congressman Rod Blagojevich—thank you, Rod, for being here. The chairman, Henry Hyde—thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm glad you're here.

I'm looking forward to flying back to Washington with the Chairman on Air

Force One. I announced this morning at the South Lawn of the White House that we've reached an agreement with Russia on a treaty that will substantially reduce our nuclear weaponry, so that we can enter into a new era of relations with Russia. I can't wait to explain it to you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate your support.

I want to thank Judy Biggert for being here. Judy, thank you for coming. I appreciate Mark Kirk as well for coming. Thank you, Congressman. Jerry Weller—thank you, Jerry. I appreciate you being here. Finally, the attorney general of the State of Illinois, Jim Ryan—thank you, Jim.

I want you to know that we're here to talk about how to make America better. Before we talk about that, I want to remind you of one thing: My job is also to make sure America is safer. And the best way to make America safe is to not only have a homeland security strategy that will support our mayors and our police and fire and EMS teams all across America; but to make America safe, we've got to hunt these killers down one by one and bring them to justice.

And much to the chagrin of the enemy, we are a united country. The security of America has nothing to do with our political parties; it has everything to do with doing our jobs. We are a united nation; we are a patient nation. And we're plenty tough when it comes to protecting that

which we hold dear. And what we hold dear is freedom, and we're not going to let anybody get it.

I can't imagine—I can't imagine what was going through the mind of those people. They must have thought we were so materialistic, so self-absorbed that all we was going to do is maybe file a couple of lawsuits. [Laughter] But much to their chagrin, they realized that we're tough. But also the world is learning we're compassionate as well. While we work to make the world more secure, we've got to make the world a better place.

And it starts right here at home. Today I had the honor of meeting Adrienne and Jerry Welenc. Would you all stand up for a second, please? [Applause] These good folks—hold on, don't applaud yet, until you hear what they've done. They have fostered over 90 children over the last 35 years. These good Americans didn't need a law; they didn't need a government telling them what to do. They decided to love a neighbor just like they wanted to be loved themselves. These good Americans asked the question, what could they do to save one person's life.

If you want to join the war on terror, help somebody in need. It's going to be hard to do what they've done; 90 children over 35 years is a fantastic feat. But it's a fabulous tribute to Americans making the decision to help somebody. We can't do it all, but we can help one person at a time. And as we do so, America will be a more compassionate place. As we work hard to defy the evil ones through military strength, we must also do so with the kindness and compassion that define America.

I want to thank you all for being here. God bless you for your work.

And we can continue to make America a better place by helping people find work. We can help America be a compassionate, decent land, where hope can penetrate places of despair and despondency, by helping people find a job.

And that's what we're here to talk about, as we reauthorize the welfare bill. It is essential that a central component of that bill be work. We must set high standards. Over the next 5 years, the States, and working with the local governments, ought to place 70 percent of the people on welfare into a job. It is important not only for our society; it's important for the people. Because as you're about to hear, a job is such an important part of a person's dignity, a person's future.

And so one of the things about welfare—welfare to work is, not only do we need to encourage businesses to provide a place; we've got to encourage States to get after it, to provide training and help. Listen, the welfare budget we're submitting is \$17 billion. That's the same level it was when we had twice the number of welfare cases we had to deal with. The welfare rolls have declined in half, yet the dollars are the same, which ought to be ample money to help people with training or drug treatment, to give them a chance so that they can work and realize the dignity of a job. When we reauthorize welfare, let us always remember that a job is a central core to someone's hopeful future.

I want to make three other points, and then I promise, Mr. Mayor, I'll be quiet—for a brief period of time. The best way to help people avoid welfare is education. Mr. Mayor, I want to thank you for setting high standards for the public schools of the city of Chicago. Washington doesn't know everything, believe it or not. That may be a horrible admission for somebody who lives there temporarily to say. The best way to help people get off welfare is to empower local folks, is to recognize one size doesn't fit all, is to recognize that the more options there are at the local level, the more opportunity it is for people to succeed.

And finally, in order to make sure welfare works, we've got to welcome faith-based and community-based programs into the compassionate delivery of help. We

shouldn't fear faith in our society. We ought to welcome faith. We ought to welcome the programs that come out of our inner-city churches or synagogues and mosques. Our Government ought to say, "You ought to be able to access Federal money to help people in need, without losing your mission." In order to make sure that welfare works, not only do you encourage jobs, but we need to welcome those programs that can fundamentally change people's lives by changing their hearts.

Mr. Mayor, I want to thank you for letting me come here to Chicago. I've been talking too much. So what I'm going to do is ask Rodney Carroll, who's in charge of this Welfare to Work Partnership—one of the things I preach is personal responsibility. There's also such things as corporate responsibility in America. CEOs have the responsibility not only to make sure that we all understand fully their assets and their liabilities, that there's full disclosure, but they have the responsibilities of helping the communities in which they live. Mike has done a fabulous job doing that for Big Brown, and Rodney's in charge of lining up corporate America to do that as well.

Welcome, Rodney.

[At this point, the discussion began.]

The President. I believe the thing that's interesting to note is, a beneficiary, of course, is UPS. [Laughter] You talk—for a person who has never worked a day in her life until UPS, you're one articulate soul.

Vivian Kimmons. Thank you, thank you.

The President. And that's a really good job.

Ms. Kimmons. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Congratulations.

Ms. Kimmons. Thank you.

The President. And your oldest daughter?

Ms. Kimmons. She's 17.

The President. What's she fixing to do?

Ms. Kimmons. She's about to graduate from the Firefighters Police Academy, tomorrow night at 6 p.m.

[The discussion continued.]

The President. Great job. Thank you very much, Lupe.

I think the—what we're trying to say here, most eloquently by these two ladies, is that in this country, if you give somebody a chance, they can succeed. Now, it takes extra help sometimes, and we've got to provide that help. It takes a little extra education. We've got to provide that education. If we don't get it right the first time, we can't quit. We've got to get it right the second time.

But the key is, is that when this country puts its mind to something, like making sure every child gets educated or making sure everybody gets a hand—businesses cooperating, local government cooperating, Federal Government—we can succeed. And here are two prime examples of what we're talking about, people who now have hope, children who see their mom—and by the way, being a single mom, raising children, is the toughest job in America; it's the toughest work. And that's what makes these two stories even more courageous and successful.

I told them, when we got it—back there in the back they said they were nervous. I said, "There's not going to be many people out there." [Laughter] But I thank you for sharing with us your hearts and your story. For those people who are watching and realize that—and maybe wondering whether you can succeed, just look at these two ladies. They're great examples of what is possible, what is possible.

Mr. Mayor, one of the things you do is you run a great city, and you care deeply about the lives of the citizens here. In the city of Chicago, the welfare rolls are down by 70 percent. We're proud of your record, Mr. Mayor, and we'd love to hear from you.

[The discussion continued.]

The President. Michael, I want to thank you all for giving us a chance to come and visit with you. There's a lot of issues that we face in Washington or here in Chicago. But there's no bigger issue than all of us remaining united to show the world what we're made out of, that people from all walks of life, all backgrounds, political parties, can come together to defend our country and at the same time elevate the spirit of this great land, to defend common values that are bigger than any single individual, and to serve a nation by helping somebody. It's really what we're talking about today, people willing to help themselves, as well as corporate America willing to provide an opportunity so people can succeed.

I want you to know that you live in the greatest country on the face of the Earth. The stories we hear here today speak to our greatness and speak to the fact that we will not rest as a nation when we see and find pockets of despair and hopeless-

ness, that in order to make this country complete, everybody has got to feel a part of its future—not just some but everybody. Oh, I know that's a high goal, but it's a goal we can achieve. Working together, it's something that this Nation can do. Out of the evil done to America will come incredible good. And part of that incredible good is that the promise of America extend its reach into every single neighborhood.

It is an honor for me to be here today. And it is an honor for me to be the President of the greatest country on the face of the Earth. God bless. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. in a loading area of the UPS Jefferson Street Hub. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago; Mike Eskew, chairman and chief executive officer, UPS; and former welfare recipients Vivian Kimmons and Guadalupe "Lupe" Meza, who participated in the discussion.

Remarks at a Luncheon for Gubernatorial Candidate Jim Ryan in Chicago May 13, 2002

Well, thank you for that warm Chicago welcome. I appreciate your kind remarks, Governor. *[Laughter]* I want to thank you all for coming. Pat, thanks for your leadership. And I want to thank you all for supporting this good, honorable man to be become the next Governor of the State of Illinois.

I want to thank all the grassroots advocates who are here, those who man the phones and stuff the envelopes and get out the vote. I want to thank you for what you've done in the past, and I want to thank you for what you're fixing to do. I can just see the headlines: Ryan Replaces Ryan. *[Laughter]* Durkin Defeats Durbin.

And I want to thank Marie. We had our picture taken with the Ryan family. I

thought it was never going to end. That's a good sign. *[Laughter]* If all the Ryans vote, it's a landslide. *[Laughter]* But I want to thank Marie. Mother's Day must have been a heck of a day for you, with all those kids. And I want to thank the sons and daughter who are here. Marie has got four sons and a daughter. It reminds me of another name in American politics: Barbara has got four sons and a daughter. The difference is, is that your sons must be treating you better. You don't have any white hair. *[Laughter]* But I want to thank you for being a great wife, and soon to be a great first lady of the State of Illinois. And to you boys out there, you listen to your mother. *[Laughter]* I'm still listening to mine. *[Laughter]*